

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Tennessee Announces 2015 Teacher of the Year Finalists, Names Them to Inaugural Advisory Council**

NASHVILLE – The Tennessee Department of Education is proud to announce the finalists for the 2014-15 Tennessee Teacher of the Year Award. The nine finalists are elementary, middle, and high school educators from each Grand Division of the state. Grand Division winners and the Teacher of the Year will be selected from this group and announced later this fall.

"Teachers are the biggest factor in the success of our students, and it is an honor to celebrate educators that are helping their students grow," Education Commissioner Kevin Huffman said. "We celebrate these finalists, but also the thousands of dedicated educators across the state."

These finalists will have the opportunity to join the commissioner's inaugural Teacher Advisory Council. Members of this new body will offer insight, feedback, and advice on issues that impact teachers across the state.

"Seeking feedback and advice from our Teacher of the Year finalists is a critical step in ensuring that we are learning from and listening to teachers from all regions of our state," Commissioner Huffman said.

The nine finalists for 2014-15 Teacher of the Year are:

### **West Tennessee**

<b>CORE Region</b>	<b>Teacher</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>District</b>
Memphis/Shelby	Karen Vogelsang	Keystone Elementary	Shelby County
Southwest	Rebecca McBride	Brighton High	Tipton County
Northwest	Kerri Newsom	Margaret Newton Elementary	Lake County

### **Middle Tennessee**

<b>CORE Region</b>	<b>Teacher</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>District</b>
Mid Cumberland	Tracy Harmon	Franklin High	Williamson County
South Central	Chris Simpson	Ingram Sowell Elementary	Lawrence County
Upper Cumberland	Shannon Streett	Woodbury Grammar	Cannon County

### East Tennessee

CORE Region	Teacher	School	District
Southeast	Cecily Williams	Cleveland Middle	Cleveland City
East Tennessee	Heather Burkhart	Pigeon Forge Middle	Sevier County
First Tennessee	Ashley Carter	John Adams Elementary	Kingsport City

The final winner will represent Tennessee in the National Teacher of the Year competition and is an ambassador for education throughout the year. To qualify, candidates must have been teaching full-time for at least five years, have a proven record of using creative, research-based teaching strategies resulting in measurable achievement, and be effective school and community leaders. A panel of professional educators from across the state scored applications to identify these finalists.

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